

LAC: Workgroup #3

The Local Advisory on Mental Health in Lewis and Clark County has been engaged in 3 work groups for the improvement of supports and identifying gaps in services for the benefit of Citizen's living with and working with Mental illness. Work Group three is assigned to - Identify gaps in community mental health services and make recommendations for additional services, as needed.

Group 3 Workgroup members:

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Abbie Colussi – BHU experience/Professional - afcolussi@gmail.com

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Alison Munson – United Way of the Lewis and Clark Area- alison@unitedwaylca.org

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Corey Bailey, Law Enforcement - cbailey@helenamt.gov

1. **“Warm Hand Off”** Work Group three has engaged in identifying the Mental Health Providers through mapping out the entry point of mental Health Crisis, and the supports that assist in the treatment of Mental Health. While work group three has noted challenges in measuring quality of care, and outcomes of applied services, they have focused on the gaps that exist between services, and transitions of exiting and entering treatment within Lewis and Clark County, and when transferring in and out of the county to provide better support with the idea of a "warm hand off." A caring compassionate response to helping during times of waiting or going from one placement to another.
2. **“Detox”** Most people who are struggling with addiction to drugs and alcohol have co-occurring mental illness. People are Detoxing at God's Love by default, and in the Lawyer's side of the Jail. Since they cannot be placed in the general population, they also need additional supervision. One recommendation that has come up several times is to have a Detox facility in the community that is more equipped for this specific need, and that is more secure for the safety of the person, the staff, and the people around while Detox is taking place.
3. **“Functional Resource Data Base”** Work group 3 has discussed the critical importance of having a good, working resource system in our county that is cohesive to connect those who need help with those who can help. The United Way has been working on trying to get the 211 system implemented but are having some challenges in getting the forms filled out by providers, and since the 211 intake operators are in Great Falls there is a disconnect in the operators having understanding for Lewis and Clark County. A cataloguing of resources and contacts of supports is critical to the Health of Lewis and Clark County because when people are connected, they have a better chance of getting the help they need before crisis occurs.

4. **“Additional Resources”** Workgroup 3 has been identifying stakeholders/agencies in the community that others may or may not know about. There are a lot of groups/agency/ and additional services that are not well known. Some of these include- Parent Support Groups, Recovery Groups, Center for Mental Health serving of children, Lifespan Respite, Our Place Drop-in Center, etc., and there needs to be a better resource to make these opportunities known. Perhaps we could have a master resource list for the County that is updated regularly. One had been done several years back by RMDC, and that is still the most complete resource, yet many have come and gone since then.
5. **“Humane response to Community Crisis”** Downtown business associations are concerned about the homeless and mentally ill population roaming the streets and how they are to assist when an apparent crisis situation comes up. Workgroup 3 discussed ways in which they may be of help. Ideas include looking at different state plans on dealing with crisis, having an educational presentation and inviting these businesses, having a “front door” where concerned agencies could call to discuss their concerns.

Updates: Work Group 3 continues to explore gaps, and opportunities

- Family First Prevention Act-Legislative Funding- This funding could be used to expand on family support to stabilize and assist with Mental Health conditions while keeping families together whenever possible> when mental health is good, families are able to remain healthy and unified.
- United Way continues to improve the 211 system. Work group 3 will look to assist in connecting the supports needed to make the system function as intended.
- Abbie plans to share information that she learned in Oregon in regards to crisis intervention. Work group 3 continues to look at other working models, and communities reporting success
- Michelle will be checking in with God’s Love to discuss how they deal with homelessness and their mental health needs/referrals. Work group 3 will be discussing additional needs expressed by the community supports like God's Love to learn from their experiences of what is working, and where assistance is needed.